

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## HB 1282

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**As Reported by House Committee On:**  
Health Care

**Title:** An act relating to sexual health education.

**Brief Description:** Regarding sexual health education.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Schual-Berke, Tom, Cody, Jarrett, Fromhold, Hankins, Appleton, Haler, Murray, Nixon, Dickerson, Kagi, Hasegawa, Roberts, Springer, DeBolt, Lantz, Chase, Hunter, Upthegrove, Darneille, Moeller, Morrell, Hunt, Simpson, Williams, Green, Wood, Kenney, Wallace, Linville, Ormsby, Kilmer, Haigh, Santos, McIntire and Walsh.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:**

Health Care: 2/8/05, 2/11/05 [DPS].

**Brief Summary of Substitute Bill**

- Requires school districts that offer sexual health education to teach both abstinence and other methods of preventing teenage pregnancy and sexually-transmitted diseases.

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### HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH CARE

**Majority Report:** The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 8 members: Representatives Cody, Chair; Morrell, Vice Chair; Appleton, Clibborn, Green, Lantz, Moeller and Schual-Berke.

**Minority Report:** Do not pass. Signed by 6 members: Representatives Bailey, Ranking Minority Member; Curtis, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Alexander, Condotta, Hinkle and Skinner.

**Staff:** Chris Blake (786-7392).

**Background:**

All public school curricula must teach the minimum requisites for good health, including methods to prevent exposure to and transmission of sexually transmitted diseases. The Washington Administrative Code, however, allows local school boards to decide whether or not to have sex education or human sexuality courses in their districts. The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 permits the use of federal funds to provide sex education or HIV

prevention education in schools as long as the instruction is age appropriate and the health benefits of abstinence are part of the curriculum.

In January 2005, the Department of Health and the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction released *Guidelines for Sexual Health Information and Disease Prevention*. These guidelines state that their purpose is to: describe effective sex education and its outcomes; provide a tool for evaluating programs, curricula, or policy; enhance and strengthen sex education programs; and to educate organizations involved in educating youth.

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**Summary of Substitute Bill:**

Any school district that offers sexual health education must assure that it is consistent with the January 2005 *Guidelines for Sexual Health Information and Disease Prevention (Guidelines)* by September 1, 2006. Sexual health education must emphasize abstinence as well as teach other methods of preventing teenage pregnancy and sexually-transmitted diseases. Sexual health education must provide medically accurate instruction and materials.

The Department of Health (Department) and the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction must make the *Guidelines*, as well as model policies and curricula related to sexual health education, available to the public. The Department may adopt rules to establish what constitutes a comprehensive sexual health education curriculum, including medically accurate information, according to peer-reviewed journals and government research reports.

**Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:**

The substitute bill removes the requirement that school districts that offer sexual health education incorporate the January 2005 *Guidelines for Sexual Health Information and Disease Prevention (Guidelines)* and requires that the school districts assure that sexual health education be consistent with the *Guidelines*. Sexual health programs must be consistent with the *Guidelines* by September 1, 2006.

The Department of Health's authority to adopt rules to determine medically accurate sexual health education is changed so that the rules establish what constitutes a comprehensive sexual health education curriculum.

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**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Effective Date of Substitute Bill:** The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

**Testimony For:** The Department of Health and the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction have created valuable guidelines for sexual health education. While the rate of teenage pregnancy is down, the health risks related to sexual behavior are still problematic in

Washington. Providing accurate and complete sexual health information is a public health priority. The abstinence-only approach to sexual health education has not been effective. There are standards for other curricula that are taught in schools and there should also be standards for sexual health curricula.

**Testimony Against:** This bill could censor programs that take different approaches from the guidelines. There is no evidence that the guidelines will reduce teenage pregnancies and sexually-transmitted diseases. This bill must emphasize the role of marriage. This bill could compromise the message of abstinence-only education programs.

**Persons Testifying:** (In support) Representative Schual-Berke, prime sponsor; Dr. Maxine Hayes, Department of Health; Beth Reis, Seattle-King County Public Health and Washington State Association of Local Public Health Officials; Mary Kenfield, Washington State Parent Teacher Association; and Don Rash, Association of Washington School Principals.

(In support with concerns) Greg Williamson, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction.

(Opposed) Dr. Sharon Quick, American Academy of Ethics; Brooke Larson, Families Northwest; LeAnna Benn, Teen-Aid; Collin Grenfell, AWARE; and Kathy Taylor, SHARE.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** (In support) Molly Franey, Planned Parenthood; Jim Anest; Susie Tracy, Washington State Medical Association; Barry Lawson, American Academy of Pediatrics of Washington; Carolyn J. Hayek, American Association of University Women; Ruby Hogan.

(In support with concerns) Pam Tollefsen, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction.

(Opposed) Jim Grenfell, Lois Gibson, and Shawn Perez, AWARE; and Kaylene Hinderliter, and Lisa Merrifield, SHARE.